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E.O. 12065: NA
TAGS: OREP (RYAN, LEO)
SUBJ: GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL REPLIES TO CRITICISM OF JOG RE JONESTOWN.

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. CHRISTOPHER (KIT) NASCIMENTO MINISTER IF THE OFFICER OF THE PRIME MINISTER, HAS WRITTEN A LENGTHY LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF CARIBBEAN CONTACT RESPONDING TO AN ARTICLE BY GORDON LEWIS CARRIED IN THE MAY ISSUE WHICH CRITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA'S ROLE IN THE JONESTOWN AFFAIR. NASCIMENTO IDENTIFIES SEVERAL "ERRORS" INTHE LEWIS PIECE AND RIDICULES THE NOTION THAT AS MUCH INFORMATION WAS KNOWN, OR COULD HAVE BEEN KNOWN, ABOUT JONESTOWN BEFORE NOVEMBER 18, 1979, AS IS KNOW NOW. HE ALSO DRAWS AN INTERESTING PARALLEL BETWEEN THE INHABITANTS OF JONESTOWN AND THE "PILGRIM FATHERS" WHO SETTLED IN MASSACHUSETTS IN 1620. END SUMMARY.

2. NACIMENTO'S LETTER TO CONTACT APPEARS UNDER THE HEADLINE "GUYANESE GOVERNMENT MINISTER COMPARES JONESTOWN "'SETTLERS' WITH PILGRIM FATHERS." NASCIMENTO BEGINS

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HIS LETTER BY SAYING THAT "JONESTWON WILL ... CONTINUE FOR MANY YEARS TO PROVIDE A HAPPY HUNTING GROUND FOR ANALYSTS ... (WHO WILL WRITE ARTICLES) FULL OF WISDOM BORN OF HINDSIGHT," AND INDICATES HE IS RESIGNED TO THIS FACT. HE TAKES EXPECTION, HOWEVER, TO WHAT HE TERMS AS PROFESSOR LEWIS' CONFUSION OF SPECULATION WITH "FACTS."

3. CHALLENGING THE CONTENTION THAT PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM HAD HAD "FRIENDLY RELATIONS" WITH JIM JONES, NASCIMENTO STATES THAT BURNHAM AND JONES MET ONLY ONCE, WHEN JONES WAS INTERODUCED TO HIM BY THE THEN LT. GOV. OF CALIFORNIA, MERVIN DYMALLY. A PHOTOGRAPH SHOWING JONES AND BURNHAM TOGETHER WHICH ILLUSTRATED PROF. LEWIS'S ARTICLE WAS TAKEN ON THE OCCASION BUT

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NASCIMENTO CLAIMS THAT DYMALLY'S IMAGE WAS CROPPED FROM THE PHOTO TO INPLY A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JONES AND BURNHAM THAN EVER EXISTED. (COMMENT: THE PEOTO WAS COPIED FROM A PEOPLES TEMPLE PUBLICITY PROCHURE.) HE DERIDES LEWIS' STATEMENT THAT "KIT NASCIMENTO... HAD BEEN IMPRESSED BY JONES," STATING FLATLY THAT HE (NASCIMENTO) NEVER MET JONES. THOSE WHO HAD MET JONES, AND HAD VISITED THE COMMUNE, HE POINTS OUT, INCLUDED A PRESIDENT OF A FAMOUS UNIVERSITY, THE HIGH COMMISSIONER OF A MAJOR COUNTRY, THE CONSUL OF ANOTHER MAJOR COUNTRY, PROMINENT OVERSEAS CONSULTATIONS AND SPECIALISTS, ALL OF WHOM SIGNED THE GUEST BOOK WITH STATEMENTS SUCH AS "A VERY IMPRESSIVE START."

4. THIS SHARED PERCEPTION OF JONESTOWN AS A WHOLESOME ENDEAVOR, NASCIMENTO CLAIMS, IS THE ANSWER TO "PROF. LEWIS'S 'TESAING QUESTION' WHY DID GUYANA 'ALLOW ITSELF TO BECOME A WILLING COLLABORATOR IN SUCH A VENTURE'."

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5. "A SERIOUS HISTORICAL ANALYSIS, AIMED AT DISCOVERING WHY INSANITY REIGNED FREE IN ONE SMALL PART OF GUYANA... WOULD BE MORE PROPERLY DIRECTED TO AN EXAMINATION OF THE ORIGIN OF THE MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLES TEMPLE, THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FORCES WHICH FRAMED THEIR OWN ... PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPERATIVES WHICH INFORMED THEIR BEHAVIOR." NASCIMENTO ASKS "WHETHER, IN HISTORICAL TERMS, A LEGITIMATE PARALLEL MIGHT NOT BE DRAWN BETWEEN THE SETTLEMENT OF THE PILGRIMS IN MASSACHUSETTS IN 1620 AND THAT OF THE PEOPLES TEMPLE IN GUYANA IN 1974....THEY WERE RURAL PEOPLE, ARTISANS FROM THE DISPOSSESSED CLASSES WITH VIRTUALLY NO EDUCATION. ONE CAN ONLY SPECULATE WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE REACTION OF THOSE EARLY SETTLERS OF AMERICAN, FLEEING FROM ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION AND RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION IN ENGLAND, IF THE GOVERNMENT OF ENGLAND HAD SENT A POLITICAL ENVOY (READ CONG. RYAN) IN PURSUIT OF THEM."

6. NACIMENTO CONCLUDES BY SAYING "THE CARIBBEAN HISTORIAN SEARCHES FOR FANCIFUL MACHIAVELLIAN POLITICAL EXPLANATIONS, WHEN IT OUGHT TO BE APPARENT THAT JONESTWON SERVES AS A TRAGIC REMINDER OF THE STRUGGLE FOR ECONOMIC SURVIVAL IN THE THIRD WORLD AND THE ABSENCE OF ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY IN THE FIRST WORLD."

7. FULL TEXT OF NACIMENTO LETTER BEING POUCHED TO DEPARTMENT (ATTN: ARA/CAR).

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